

Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (NVLTCOP)



Office of the State
Long-Term Care
Ombudsman

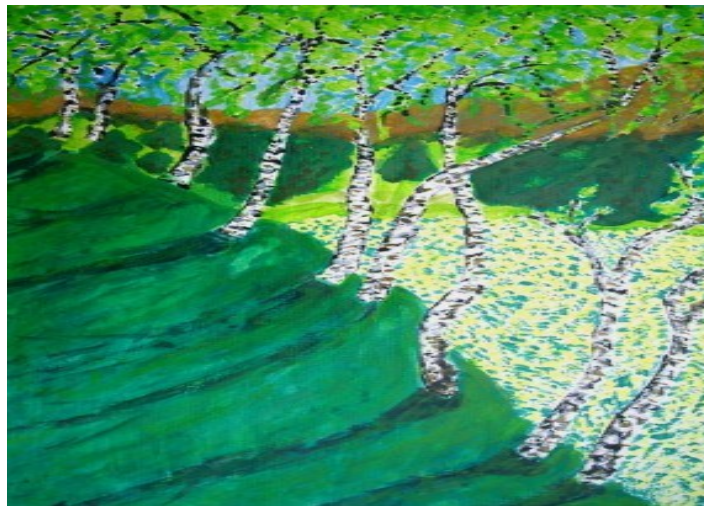
Promoting Quality - Protecting Rights

*Serving the Jurisdictions of Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun,
through their Area Agencies on Aging*



THE UPDATE

Volume 8 Issue 4 August 2014



Summertime is here and with it comes the danger of hurricanes, thunderstorms, high winds, flooding and power outages. Hurricane season is from June 1 to November 30 so be prepared! Check out **Ready Virginia**, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management's new mobile application (app). This app provides alerts for hazardous weather, GPS-enabled evacuation routes, flood risk updates, and emergency manager contacts. It also allows you to share emergency plans with family and friends, and provides a checklist for essential emergency supplies, including special items for older adults, people with functional and medical needs, and pets. This app can be found at www.ReadyVirginia.gov, in the App Store and Google Play.

(continued on page 2)

In this issue:

- Prepare for Summer Storms
- Brain Health as We Age
- Look for Residents' Rights Month Information in Our Next Issue
- Volunteer Spotlight
- Financial Scams—Are You Handling Someone Else's Money?

There is a regional version of this app for residents and businesses in Northern Virginia called **ReadyNOVA**, that is available at the same sites.

More and more people are using computers and mobile devices to put a plan in place to know what to do before, during, and after an emergency. Here are the **Top 10 Digital Preparedness Tips**:

1. Tell your friends & family you are OK via text, email, Twitter, Facebook and other social media
2. Learn how to send updates via text and internet from your mobile phone in case voice communications are not available
3. If you have a life-threatening emergency, call 9-1-1. Remember that you cannot currently text 9-1-1. Call 9-1-1 only for an emergency
4. Save important contacts to your phone
5. Keep charged batteries and car-phone chargers available as back-up power for your cell phone
6. Conserve your cell phone battery by reducing the brightness of your screen, placing your phone in airplane mode, and closing apps you are not using that draw power
7. Immediately following a disaster, resist using your mobile device to watch streaming videos, download music or videos, or play video games, because they can add to network congestion. Limiting use of these services can help potentially life-saving emergency calls get through to 9-1-1
8. If you do not have a cell phone, keep a prepaid phone card to use if needed during or after a disaster
9. Charge your digital camera or buy batteries for your film camera if you need to document storm damage afterwards
10. Get connected with your local emergency alert system and with the Ready Virginia app for your mobile device



Brain Health As You Age: You Can Make a Difference!

The Administration for Community Living (ACL), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have put together resources on keeping our brains healthy so that we can be more independent as we get older. Along with keeping our bodies in good shape, we want to keep our minds healthy, too.

Developing a brain disease or injury as you age depends on a combination of things: your family's genes, your environment, and your health choices.

Diseases and conditions that affect brain health:

- ♦ Genetic makeup
- ♦ Certain medicines, smoking and excessive alcohol
- ♦ Health problems like diabetes and heart disease
- ♦ Diseases like depression and Alzheimer's
- ♦ Brain injury
- ♦ Poor diet, insufficient sleep, lack of physical and social activity

Examples of health choices you can make to help prevent brain disease include:

- ♦ Take care of your health
- ♦ Eat a healthy diet
- ♦ Drink alcohol moderately, if at all
- ♦ Get active and stay active
- ♦ Sleep 7-8 hours each night
- ♦ Learn new things
- ♦ Connect with your family, friends, and communities

The CDC website has additional information at www.cdc.gov/aging/healthybrain/resources.htm.



The National Consumer Voice is the leading national voice representing consumers in issues related to long-term care, helping to ensure that consumers are empowered to advocate for themselves. It is also a primary source of information and tools for consumers, families, and caregivers, advocates and ombudsmen to help ensure quality care for the individual.

The National Consumer Voice has designated the theme for this year's Residents' Rights Month in October as:

Better Staffing: The Key to Better Care

Residents' Rights month highlights the importance of promoting the rights of and quality of care and services received by residents who live in our country's nursing homes, assisted living and board and care facilities.

To observe the month, the National Consumer Voice recommends:

1. Educating staff on residents' rights (annual requirement)
2. Building relationships with residents, families and staff
3. Promoting community involvement in long-term care
4. Increasing community awareness of residents' rights
5. Highlighting the facilities' dedication to promote residents' rights and person centered care

Look for additional information in the next issue of the **UPDATE**. There is proposed legislation coming up on the issue of better staffing.

Need Information or Have a Concern About Nursing or Assisted Living Facilities?

Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

12011 Government Center Parkway,
Suite 708
Fairfax, VA 22035

Offices hours are Monday through
Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Intake Line: 703-324-5861 TTY: 711

Fax: 703-653-1796

Email us at:

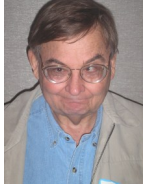
NVLTCOP@FairfaxCounty.Gov

**To view information on the
NVLTCOP
website and to see the
Investigation and Complaint Log,
please go to:**

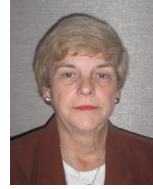
www.FairfaxCounty.Gov/LTCOmbudsman

What an Ombudsman does:

- ♦ **Advocates** for improving the quality of life for persons receiving long-term care
- ♦ **Resolves complaints** against long-term care providers through **counseling, negotiation, and investigation**
- ♦ **Provides information** about long-term care providers to help make an informed decision
- ♦ **Educates** the community about long-term care issues
- ♦ **Visits** residents of long-term care facilities on a weekly basis through our volunteer program
- ♦ **Trains** long-term care staff on long-term care related information
- ♦ **Consults** with providers



OMBUDSMAN VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Don and Kitty Lou Smith

Kitty Lou and Don Smith have worked together as Ombudsman Volunteers since 2002. They grew up in southwestern Virginia in typical Southern towns of the 50's, with the pluses and minuses that go with them. They were raised with strong family ties and the tradition of passing on rich oral histories.

Kitty Lou and Don met and married while in college (Kitty Lou, at Randolph-Macon Women's College, and Don, at the University of Virginia) and have spent the following years merging their lives. They have the same basic values, family backgrounds, and many of the same interests; they have supported each other in following special pursuits and passions. They have a son and a teen-aged granddaughter living nearby who provide pleasure and laughter. They both love to travel and have learned valuable insights into the lives, beliefs, and cultures of other people.

Kitty Lou has always liked going to school and spent most of her life taking courses and learning new skills. Teaching others at all levels from grade school (general science) to university level (physics) has been her life's work. She spent most of her teaching career in Fairfax County. She then directed a science curriculum project at the Smithsonian Institution. Currently, she works as an education consultant for the Smithsonian and the Koshland Science Museum in Washington, DC.

As a graduate civil engineer, Don has enjoyed working on projects in Tidewater, Virginia, Albany and Selkirk, New York, Columbia, Maryland, Nashville, Tennessee, and Singapore. It has been very gratifying for him to work on landmark projects, such as churches, fire stations, a state university, libraries, and commercial buildings, and that he got to meet many interesting owners, architects, designers, contractors, and craftsmen.

Kitty Lou and Don started married life as impoverished students in Charlottesville. After living in several other areas, they settled permanently in Springfield. They like the area's diverse people, location, intellectual stimulation, and educational and cultural opportunities.

Kitty Lou and Don wanted to continue some useful kind of community service work in retirement. When they discovered the Ombudsman Program in 2002, they signed up for training. In a recent interview, they said they feel uplifted by interacting with residents and hearing their life stories. Overall, they said the experience has expanded their horizons, teaching them about aging, geriatric care, human nature and the human condition. The death of a resident is always sad for them, but they try to hold onto fond memories of those who have passed away.

Sharing a lesson learned, Kitty Lou and Don said that they found that by talking with others involved in the situation often helps, especially when the exact nature of a complaint or the actual sequence of events is unclear. The most important thing they have found is to listen carefully to the resident and acknowledge their comments, feelings, and concerns so that the resident feels that the Ombudsman is their advocate.

MANAGING SOMEONE ELSE'S MONEY: Common Consumer Scams

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has published information for those who are handling someone else's money. This could be in the role of a Social Security representative payee or as a Veteran Administration (VA) fiduciary. If you agree to be a representative payee, Social Security would pay you the person's benefits to use on his or her behalf. It is important that you know what the beneficiary's needs are so you can decide how benefits can best be used for his or her personal care and well-being. A Veteran's Administration fiduciary is appointed if a person can no longer make financial decisions. A fiduciary is responsible for managing the beneficiary's income and ensuring the beneficiary's just debts are paid.

Since both of these designations mean that you would be acting on behalf of another person, "Managing Someone Else's Money" was created. The consumer scams that older people are subject to can also be applied to anyone handling their money. Some of the financial exploitation methods include:

- Relative in need: Someone who pretends to be a family member or friend calls or e-mails you to say they are in trouble and need you to wire money right away
- Drug plans: Scammers pretend they are with Medicare prescription drug plans, and try to sell Medicare discount drug cards that are not valid. Companies with Medicare drug plans are not allowed to send unsolicited mail, emails, or phone calls
- Fake "official" mail: Scammers send letters or e-mails that look like they are from a legitimate bank, business, or agency to try to get your personal information or bank account number
- Charity appeals: You get a call or letter from someone asking for money for a fake charity—either the charity does not exist or the charity did not call or write to you
- Lottery or sweepstakes: You get a call or e-mail that you have a chance to win a lot of money through a foreign country's sweepstakes or lottery. The caller will offer tips about how to win if you pay a fee or buy something. Or the caller or e-mail says you already have won and you must give your bank account information or pay a fee to collect your winnings

These are a few of the scams that are being seen targeted at older Americans and their caregivers. For additional information, please see www.consumerfinance.gov/blog/managing-someone-elses-money/.



The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all programs and services. To request reasonable accommodations or alternate formats, call 703-324-5861 (voice); 711 (TTY).

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